WILLIAMS JESSIE M
78 GEORGETOWN 406

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ACTION SCS-06
INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 P-01 L-03 PA-05 DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 4/23/
RDS☐or XDS☐EAT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
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R 011031Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6148
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC (STOEN, JOHN VICTOR)
SUBJECT: W/M JOHN VICTOR STOEN
REF: (A) STATE 22642, (B) GEORGETOWN 0092

1. GOG ALREADY IS ACUTELY AWARE OF INTENSE USG AND CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN THE JOHN STOEN CUSTODY CASE. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AND OTHER GOG OFFICIALS, THE AMBASSADOR AND OTHER EMBOFFS HAVE EXPRESSED THIS INTEREST. WE HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT IN THIS CIVIL DISPUTE BETWEEN TWO GROUPS OF AMERICANS, THE USG WILL NOT TAKE SIDES AS TO THE MERITS OF EITHER SIDE'S ARGUMENTS, AND THAT USG INTEREST IS CONFINED TO ASSURING THAT THE MATTER IS ADJUDICATED IN THE COURTS STRICTLY ON ITS MERITS WITHOUT OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE FROM ANY QUARTER.

2. DECISION OF EVEN A COURT HEARING ON CUSTODY OF JOHN STOEN MAY NOT OCCUR FOR SOME TIME. THE ARREST ORDER AGAINST JONES OBTAINED BY THE STOENS' LAWYER IN SEPTEMBER IS WHAT THE COURT IS NOW CONSIDERING. KNOWLEDGEABLE GOG OFFICIALS AND DISINTERESTED LAWYERS HAVE DOUBTS THAT THE ARREST ORDER WAS SOUNDLY BASED IN LAW AND THEREFORE PROBABLY WILL NOT BE UPHELD. WHATEVER ITS OUTCOME, THE CUSTODY QUESTION ITSELF WILL BE SCHEDULED FOR A HEARING AFTER THIS SIDE ISSUE IS SETTLED.

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3. ON THE MATTER OF THE GOG ENFORCING ITS LAWS, EMBASSY BELIEVES IT WOULD BE GRATUITOUS TO MAKE A REPRESENTATION AT THIS TIME TO THE GOG TO COMMIT ITSELF TO THE ENFORCEMENT OF AN AS YET UNRENDERED DECISION IN FAVOR OF THE STOENS. GIVEN THE SIEVE-LIKE QUALITY OF THE GOG IT IS HIGHLY POSSIBLE THAT SUCH A DEMARCHE COULD BECOME KNOWN IN LEGAL CIRCLES AND POSSIBLY PREJUDICE THE CASE. UNTIL PROVEN OTHERWISE, WE SHOULD ASSUME THAT THE GOG WILL ENFORCE ANY DECISION OF THE COURT. AS REPORTED REF B, THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS PERSONALLY ASSURED TIM STOEN THAT A COURT ORDER ON THE CUSTODY OF JOHN STOEN WILL BE ENFORCED.

4. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, THE EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE HELPFUL OR PROPER TO IMPLY TO THE GOG THAT WE DO NOT TRUST IT TO ADHERE TO DUE PROCESS OF LAW OR TO ENFORCE A COURT ORDER, WHEN ONE IS ISSUED. THE EMBASSY WILL REMAIN ALERT FOR ANY INDICATIONS THAT POLITICAL INFLUENCE IS BEING BROUGHT TO BEAR ON THIS CASE. IF IT

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APPEARS THAT SUCH INFLUENCE IS BEING EXERTED, THE EMBASSY WILL EXPRESS USG CONCERN.

5. WE HAVE NOTED THAT THE STOENS AND THEIR LAWYER ON THE ONE HAND AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE'S TEMPLE ON THE OTHER ARE EACH ENDEAVORING TO ENTICE THE EMBASSY AND THE DEPARTMENT INTO TAKING THEIR SIDES IN THIS CASE. BY ATTEMPTING TO INFLUENCE THE GOG ON THIS CASE IN FAVOR OF THE STOENS THE EMBASSY WOULD BECOME VULNERABLE TO ACCUSTIONS FROM THE PEOPLES' TEMPLE THAT IT IS ATTEMPTING TO PREJUDGE A MATTER THAT IS STILL PENDING BEFORE THE COURTS HERE.

BURKE

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